



Competency Standards for Western Herbalists

Legal and Professional Practice

Competency 1 Functions in accordance with legislation and common law affecting Western herbal medicine practice

Element 1.1 Demonstrates and acts upon knowledge of legislation and common law pertinent to Western herbal medicine practice

Cues

- Practices Western herbal medicine within the requirements of legislation and common law
- Identifies and interprets laws in relation to Western herbal medicine practice, including the administration of medicines, negligence, consent, report writing, confidentiality and vicarious liability
- Recognises and acts upon breaches of law relating to Western herbal medicine practice

Element 1.2 Complies with policies and guidelines that have legal and professional implications for practice

Cues

- Complies with legal policies and guidelines, for example, occupational health and safety, child protection

Element 1.3 Formulates documentation according to legal and professional guidelines

Cues

- Adheres to legal requirements in all aspects of documentation
- Documentation is contemporaneous, comprehensive, logical, legal, clear, concise and accurate
- Documentation identifies the author and designation

Element 1.4 Fulfils the duty of care in the course of Western herbal medicine practice

Cues

- Undertakes Western herbal medicine practice in accordance with professional standards for Western herbalists

Competency 2 Accepts accountability and responsibility for own actions within Western herbal medicine practice

Element 2.1 Recognises and acts within own knowledge base and scope of practice

Cues-

- Analyses strengths and limitations in own skill, knowledge and experience and addresses limitations
- Accepts professional responsibility and personal accountability for own practice
- Collaborates with other health care providers when care is outside the scope of practice

Element 2.2 Identifies unsafe practice and takes appropriate action

Cues

- Identifies practices that compromise safe and effective care, or contravenes legislation, and takes appropriate action

- Utilises risk management and/or open disclosure policies in the follow-up of unsafe practice
- Promotes and engages in ongoing development of the safety and quality improvement agenda to optimise health outcomes of patients
- Supports other Western herbalists or health care providers who report unsafe practice

Element 2.3 Consults with, and refers to, another Western herbalist or appropriate health care provider when the needs of the patient fall outside own scope of practice or competence

Cues

- Ensures timely consultation and referral
- Develops and maintains collegial networks with Western herbal medicine colleagues and others to optimise outcomes for the patient

Element 2.4 Assumes responsibility for professional Western herbal medicine leadership functions

Cues

- Integrates leadership skills into practice
- Acts as a role model for other colleagues by exemplifying best practice in Western herbal medicine
- Provides advice and guidance in problem solving and decision making to Western herbal medicine colleagues and others as appropriate

Western herbal medicine Knowledge and Practice

Competency 3 Communicates information effectively to facilitate decision-making by the patient

Element 3.1 Communicates effectively with the patient, their family and friends

Cues

- Actively listens to the patient and responds appropriately
- Uses language that is readily understood
- Allows adequate time to meet the needs of patients for information, advice and support
- Engages the assistance of a professional interpreter where appropriate

Element 3.2 Plans and evaluates care in partnership with the patient

Cues

- Listens to the patient to identify their needs and involves the patient in decision making
- Obtains informed consent for Western herbal medicine interventions
- Documents decisions, actions and outcomes including the patient's response to care

Competency 4 Promotes safe and effective Western herbal medicine care

Element 4.1 Applies knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable patient-centred care

Cues

- Participates in respectful partnerships with the patient and other members of the health care team
- Practices in ways that respects each patient's emotional, social, cultural and lifestyle needs

Element 4.2 Manages the Western herbal medicine care of patients

Cues

- Organises workload to facilitate Western herbal medicine care for patients
- Demonstrates appropriate time management and priority setting skills
- Ensures the effective use of resources including personnel

Competency 5 Assesses, plans, provides and evaluates safe and effective Western herbal medicine care

Element 5.1 Utilises Western herbal medicine knowledge and skills to facilitate optimal health for the patient

Cues

- Promotes the understanding of health

Element 5.2 Assesses the health and wellbeing of the patient

Cues

- Carries out a comprehensive assessment of the patient
- Interprets and acts upon information from the assessment

Element 5.3 Considers emotional wellbeing of patient in the development of the therapeutic relationship and the provision of Western herbal medicine care

Cues

- Acknowledges the importance of psychological wellbeing in long term health
- Engages in opportunities for patients to discuss emotional and psychological health concerns
- Implement general counselling techniques to support patients experiencing emotional and psychological health concerns
- Refer to appropriate health care providers where mental health issues beyond the scope of the Western herbalist are identified

Element 5.4 Plans, provides, and is responsible for, safe and effective Western herbal medicine care

Cues

- Orders (within relevant legislation) and interprets relevant investigative and diagnostic tests and screening procedures
- Supports the patient and ensures appropriate, timely interventions are undertaken

Element 5.5 Understands Western herbal medicine principles and their clinical application

Cues

- actively integrates Western herbal medicine principles with the desired health outcomes of the patient
- shows clinical judgement of the role of a Western herbalist in the clinical management of a patient

Element 5.6 Demonstrates the ability to initiate, supply and administer relevant Western herbal medicine treatments in a safe and effective manner within relevant state or territory legislation

Cues

- Maintains up to date knowledge about treatments commonly used in Western herbal medicine practice
- Provides information to the patient
- Demonstrates safe administration of Western herbal medicine treatments including consideration of side effects, contra-indications, pharmacological interactions and documentation
- Undertakes to report adverse events associated with Western herbal medicine treatments to appropriate state/territory and commonwealth organisations

Element 5.7 Applies knowledge, skills and professionalism in use of treatment, procedures and investigations with patients

Cues

- Applies Western herbal medicine treatments and procedures safely and professionally with full consent of patient
- Demonstrate judicious consideration and prioritisation of patient health and socioeconomic needs when determining the Western herbal medicine management plans
- Uses, justifies and interprets appropriate treatments and procedures to achieve the best outcome for the patient

Competency 6 Assesses, plans and evaluates safe and effective Western herbal medicine care for the patient with complex needs

Element 6.1 Utilises a range of Western herbal medicine knowledge and skills to provide Western herbal medicine care for the patient with complex needs as part of a collaborative team

Cues

- Demonstrates a sound knowledge base of relevant disease processes and health complexities
- Demonstrates an understanding of the particular psychosocial needs of the patient where there are complexities
- Continues to provide Western herbal medicine care where appropriate when collaboration with a medical practitioner or other health care provider is required
- Uses, justifies and interprets appropriate treatments and procedures to achieve the best outcome for the patient

Element 6.2 Recognises and responds effectively in emergencies or urgent situations

Cues

- Recognises and responds to any urgent or emergency situations with timely and appropriate intervention, consultation and/or referral
- Maintain up to date skills and knowledge concerning first aid and emergency care where appropriate

Element 6.3 Implements effective rehabilitation care in Western herbal medicine practice

Cues

- Rehabilitation care is undertaken with full knowledge of the ongoing health implication of chronic health care

Western Herbalist as a Health Care professional

Competency 7 Practice as appropriate to the Western herbalists' role in the health care team

Element 7.1 Fulfils the role of Western herbal medicine practitioner in the health care team

Cues

- Understands the role of Western herbalists as primary, secondary and complementary health care practitioners
- Provides appropriate care to patients as determined by the scope of Western herbal medicine care and based on the patient's needs and the involvement of other health care providers in their care

Element 7.2 Negotiates with other health professionals to define the Western herbalists' role in the patients' health care team

Cues

- Demonstrates effective negotiation and mediation with other members of the health care team to facilitate a patient-centred outcome

Competency 8 Advocates to protect the rights of individuals and communities to Western herbal medicine care

Element 8.1 Respects and supports individuals to be self-determining in promoting their own health and well-being

Cues

- Articulates primary health care principles and acts accordingly
- Works with patients to identify and develop appropriate sources of social and community support and health care
- Concludes the Western herbal medicine relationship in a timely and appropriate manner
- Able to communicate effectively and within legal boundaries with other health professions and media
- Understands the impact of media statements and the wide reaching influence of media

Competency 9 Develops strategies to implement and support collaborative Western herbal medicine practice

Element 9.1 Demonstrates effective communication with Western herbalists, health care providers and other professionals

Cues

- Adapts styles and methods of communication to maximise effectiveness
- Uses a range of communication methods including written and oral
- Liaises and negotiates with colleagues at all levels to optimise outcome for the patient
- Discusses and clarifies with relevant health care providers interventions that appear in appropriate or unnecessary and negotiates a collaborative plan
- Demonstrates effective communication during consultation, referral and case transfer

Element 9.2 Establishes, maintains and evaluates professional relationships with other health care providers

Cues

- Recognises the role of other members of the health care team in the provision of health care
- Identifies and responds to factors that facilitate or hinder professional relationships
- Invites, acts upon, an offers, constructive feedback on Western herbal medicine practice from peers and colleagues

Competency 10 Actively supports Western herbal medicine as a public health strategy

Element 10.1 Responds to causes of threats to health and individuals at risk in Western herbal medicine practice

Cues

- Ability to educate patients who are at risk of or carry infectious disease
- Acts to address risk factors affecting individuals regarding infectious disease

Element 10.2 Implementation of preventative care to promote long term wellness

Cues

- Promotion of patient self-care through education and Western herbal medicine treatment including the development of long term care plans
- Knowledge of outcomes of preventative treatments and programs to ensure their effectiveness
- Understanding of personal capabilities and the need to follow up care for patients

Element 10.3 Advocates for, and promotes Western herbal medicine practice, within the context of public health policy

Cues

- Acknowledges the impact of social, economic and psychological factors on patient's lives
- Acts to address public health issues including the promotion of healthy dietary and lifestyle choices and responding appropriately in situations where there is domestic violence, drugs or alcohol use
- Collaborates with other health professionals to plan, provide and evaluate care which facilitates health promotion and disease prevention

Competency 11 Ensures Western herbal medicine practice is culturally safe

Element 11.1 Plans, implements and evaluates strategies for providing culturally safe practice for patients, their families and colleagues

Cues

- Incorporates knowledge of cross-cultural and historical factors into practice
- Demonstrate respect for differences in cultural meanings and responses to health care
- Recognises the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and their communities
- Recognises and respects customary law

Reflective and Ethical Practice

Competency 12 Bases Western herbal medicine practice on ethical decision making

Element 12.1 Practices in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant state/territory and commonwealth privacy obligations under law

Cues

- Demonstrates knowledge of contemporary ethical issues in Western herbal medicine
- Demonstrates ethical behaviour towards patients, colleagues and communities
- Develops and assesses strategies to address ethical issues and breaches of confidentiality and privacy in collaboration with others

Competency 13 Identifies personal beliefs and develops these in ways that enhance Western herbal medicine practice

Element 13.1 Addresses the impact of personal beliefs and experiences on the provision of Western herbal medicine care

Cues

- Recognises own attitudes, biases and values and their potential impact on practice
- Evaluates own practice and its effect on patients

Element 13.2 Appraises and addresses the impact of power relations on Western herbal medicine practice

Cues

- Demonstrates an awareness of the impact of gender, race and social policies on individuals and health care
- Work towards addressing power imbalances between health care providers, patients and the community
- Act to eliminate harassment, victimisation and bullying in the workplace
- Demonstrates a commitment to, and respect for, colleagues and peers

Competency 14 Acts to enhance the professional development of self and others

Element 14.1 Assesses and acts upon own professional development needs

Cues

- Identifies own learning needs through reflective practice and self-evaluation
- Contributes to self-appraisal and peer review activities as appropriate
- Prepares and actions annual professional development plans using continuing professional development frameworks
- Seeks and engages in opportunities to maintain or update skills, or knowledge, attitudes and experience
- Demonstrates and documents own professional development

Element 14.2 Contributes to, and evaluates, the learning experiences and professional development of others

Cues

- Supports students to meet their learning needs and objectives
- Contributes to ongoing education programs
- Undertakes and critiques mutual sharing of experiences and knowledge with multidisciplinary colleagues
- Contributes to mentoring, peer support and/or clinical supervision
- Seeks and engages in opportunities to maintain or update skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience

Competency 15 Uses evidence to inform Western herbal medicine practice

Element 15.1 Ensures both traditional and research evidence is incorporated into practice appropriately

Cues

- Values and acknowledges the importance of traditional knowledge, research and evidence
- Maintains current knowledge about relevant research
- Demonstrates skills in retrieving and understanding research evidence including levels of enquiry and forms of evidence

- Applies objective consideration of both traditional knowledge and research in clinical decision making
- Discusses the implications of evidence with the patient
- Reviews practice and policies in the context of new evidence and knowledge
- Supports research in Western herbal medicine

Element 15.2 Interprets evidence as a basis to inform practice and decision making

Cues

- Underpins Western herbal medicine practice with current knowledge and best evidence
- Accesses, shares and utilises evidence to inform practice
- Explains options while recognising the patient's right to choose